

RELEASED IN FULL

WHA Press Guidance
April 15, 2002

**VENEZUELA: RALLYING SUPPORT FOR VENEZUELAN
DEMOCRACY**

Q: Do you have an update on the situation in Venezuela?

A: AS NOTED IN THE WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT ISSUED ON
APRIL 14, WE CONTINUE TO MONITOR EVENTS IN
VENEZUELA WITH GREAT CONCERN.

THE UNITED STATES UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF
THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS) FACT-
FINDING MISSION LED BY OAS SECRETARY GENERAL CESAR
GAVIRIA. IT IS OUR EXPECTATION THAT THE SECRETARY
GENERAL'S MISSION, WHICH DEPARTED THIS MORNING,
WILL EXAMINE ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE
RECENT EVENTS IN VENEZUELA. THE OAS AND THE INTER-
AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER WILL PLAY A VITAL
ROLE IN STRENGTHENING THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF
DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA.

UNCLASSIFIED

ENCOURAGED BY PRESIDENT CHAVEZ'S CALLS FOR NATIONAL REFLECTION, WE URGE ALL VENEZUELANS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND GENUINE DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE. WE STRONGLY URGE VENEZUELANS TO REFRAIN FROM SEEKING RETRIBUTION FROM POLITICAL AND CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS FOR THE EVENTS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HOPE THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLENCE WILL BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

If Asked

Q: Why did the United States not condemn the attempted overthrow of Venezuelan President Chávez on April 11?

A: THE UNITED STATES CONDEMNED THE ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER IN VENEZUELA ON APRIL 14 BY JOINING OUR HEMISPHERIC PARTNERS TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION BY THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS). SINCE THE APRIL 11 REMOVAL OF PRESIDENT CHAVEZ AND THROUGH HIS SUBSEQUENT RETURN TO THE PRESIDENCY, THE UNITED STATES HAS WORKED ACTIVELY

UNCLASSIFIED

**THROUGH THE OAS AND UNDER THE FRAMEWORK OF THE
INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER TO DEVELOP A
HEMISPHERIC RESPONSE TO THE RECENT EVENTS IN
VENEZUELA.**

**AMONG OTHER ACTIONS, THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTED
THE APRIL 14 OAS RESOLUTION THAT RESOLVED TO
CONDEMN THE ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER
IN VENEZUELA AND THE DEPLORABLE ACTS OF VIOLENCE
THAT LED TO THE LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE. THE UNITED
STATES SUPPORTED THAT RESOLUTION'S EXPRESSION OF
SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA, AND THEIR
EFFORTS TO REESTABLISH FULL DEMOCRACY, WITH
GUARANTEES FOR CITIZENS AND RESPECT FOR
FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS.**

**GUIDED BY THE INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER,
THE UNITED STATES JOINED ITS HEMISPHERIC PARTNERS
TO CALL FOR THE NORMALIZATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK IN VENEZUELAN.**

UNCLASSIFIED

FINALLY, THE UNITED STATES FULLY SUPPORTS THE FACT-FINDING MISSION HEADED BY THE OAS SECRETARY GENERAL TO PROMOTE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE THE FULL RESTORATION OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF DEMOCRACY. THE SPECIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO BE HELD IN WASHINGTON ON APRIL 18 WILL BE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT IN THE EFFORT TO MARSHALL HEMISPHERIC SUPPORT FOR VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY.

4
UNCLASSIFIED